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Cabinet okays
President's rule
in Puducherry

^{25/2/21}
CHENNAI/NEW DELHI: For the first time in 30 years, the Union Territory (UT) of Puducherry is set to be placed under President's rule based on a recommendation by Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan.

No party staked claim to form the government after V Narayanasamy resigned as chief minister on Monday, after his dispensation was reduced to a minority.

The decision to impose President's rule was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The file has gone to President Ram Nath Kovind, who is likely to give his assent any time. Once the notification is issued, the Assembly will be dissolved.

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First time in 30 yrs, Puducherry set for President's rule

E T SIVAPRIYAN & SHEMIN JOY
CHENNAI/NEW DELHI, DHNS

For the first time in 30 years, the tiny Union Territory of Puducherry is all set to be placed under President's rule based on a recommendation by Lt. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan. No party staked claim to form the government after V Narayanasamy resigned as chief minister on Monday after his dispensation plunged into a minority.

The decision to impose President's rule in Puducherry, which is headed for polls in April-May, was taken at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, based on a recommendation by Soundararajan, who noted in her report to the Centre that no party in the UT was willing to form the government.

The file has gone to President Ram Nath Kovind, who is likely to give his assent. Once the notification is issued, the assembly will be dissolved.

Sources told *DH* that NR Congress, the principal Opposition party in Puducherry, and its allies—AIADMK and BJP—refused to stake claim to form the government, whose tenure ends in May. "Since the major Opposition party

refused to stake a claim, the L-G had no choice but to recommend President's rule," a source said.

The last time the UT came under Central rule was in 1991 for four months. This is the sixth time the UT will be under President's rule.

The development came on the eve of Modi's much-awaited visit to Puducherry during which he will inaugurate several projects for the UT. The BJP, which hardly has any base in Puducherry, wants to utilise the brief spell of the President's rule to announce "attractive programmes" ahead of the elections.

The crisis in Puducherry was triggered after five Congress and one DMK MLA resigned as legislators in the past few weeks, bringing down the strength of the government.

While the Congress had the support of 12 MLAs, the Opposition claimed the support of 14 legislators, including three nominated members who are BJP leaders.

The Congress has squarely blamed the BJP for the fall of its only government in South India with AICC in charge of Puducherry alleging that Union Home Minister Amit Shah threatened Congress MLAs to resign.